

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**ASSET MANAGEMENT, CULTURE
AND HOUSING CABINET MEMBER**

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE MUSEUM – LEARNING ASSISTANTS

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To delete two vacant posts of Learning Assistant (6.25 hours per week) and create one post of Learning Assistant (18 hours per week).
- 1.2 The key points in this report area as follows:
- We are struggling to retain staff in the post of Learning Assistant. The feedback we have received from the previous post-holders is that the hours are insufficient to make the job viable.
 - The proposal is to make the job viable by combining the two vacant posts and reducing the number of hours for casual staff. This makes the proposed change cost neutral.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 We have a small Learning Team based at the North Lincolnshire Museum. The team includes a Learning Manager, Learning Officer (job share), four contracted Learning Assistants and two casual Learning Assistants.
- 2.2 Each of the Learning Assistants is employed on an annualised hours basis for 6.25 hours per week. They deliver a programme of 26 different National Curriculum based schools workshops. We also offer an extensive programme of family events and activities at Normanby Hall Country Park and the North Lincolnshire Museum. Recently, our work has diversified to include 'Tots Time' sessions for under 5s, reminiscence sessions as well as work with adults with learning disabilities and with dementia.
- 2.3 At present we have vacancies for two Learning Assistants. Although we have not had any difficulty in recruiting to these posts in the past we have experienced problems in retaining staff.

- 2.4 We attract 8,454 schoolchildren to our workshops at Normanby, the North Lincolnshire Museum, Water's Edge, Baysgarth House Museum and the Brigg Heritage Centre. A further 1,671 attend our wider programme of events and activities.
- 2.5 Demand for the Learning Service is expanding beyond our capacity to deliver.
- 2.6 An extensive training programme is required for each member of staff to ensure they are able to deliver the full programme of workshops, events and activities. It costs £3,240 to train a member of staff to deliver the workshops. The last three Learning Assistants we recruited resigned not long after completing their training. This is not a good use of our resources. We therefore need to improve our ability to retain staff in these posts.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Option 1 – delete the two posts of Learning Assistant (6.25 hours per week) and create one post of Learning Assistant (18 hours per week).
- 3.2 Option 2 – recruit to the two existing Learning Assistant vacancies.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 is the preferred option. We know from the recent holders of the post that the reason they have left the service is because the hours were insufficient. Increasing the hours to 18 per week makes the job much more attractive. It will be more cost effective for us and increases capacity by five and a half hours per week. Converting casual hours to permanent will help us to meet the increased demand for our service from customers.
- 4.2 Option 2 – would leave us with the same problem regarding retention of staff, no additional capacity and a less efficient use of resources training staff who then leave the service after a very short time in post.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 Finance – the proposal would increase the staffing costs by £2,673 per annum. This would be met from the existing casual staffing budget for the Learning Service. By increasing the hours of the permanent post we would need fewer casual hours, making the proposal cost neutral.
- 5.2 Staffing – as both posts are currently vacant there are no staffing implications.

5.3 Property – there are no property implications.

5.4 IT – there are no IT implications.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 Not applicable.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 The Trade Unions have received a copy of this report. Any comments will be fed back at the briefing.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 To delete the two posts of Learning Assistant (6.25 hours per week) and establish a new post of Learning Assistant (18 hours per week).

8.2 To begin the recruitment process to fill the post.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None